

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3354

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 22605

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EXDIS

FOR WILSON (ORM) AND MILLER (EA)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: REFUGEE REPORTING PROBLEMS

REF: STATE 254266

1. REGRET THAT OUR REPORTING ON THE REFUGEE SITUATION HAS CREATED PROBLEMS IN YOUR DEALINGS WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT. TWO BASIC PROBLEMS HAVE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO GET A FIRM GRIP ON THIS SITUATION. FIRST, AS YOU KNOW, WE ARE DEALING WITH A MOVING TARGET. MANY OF THE REFUGEES ARE ON THE MOVE; THEY SHIFT FROM CAMP TO CAMP OR THEY DRIFT INTO BANGKOK AND ARE SUBSEQUENTLY ROUNDED UP AND RETURNED TO A CAMP. MANY ARE SCATTERED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE THE CAMPS. AS A RESULT, WE ARE CONSTANTLY FINDING REFUGEES ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN PREVIOUSLY SCREENED. SECONDLY, WE HAVE ONLY LIMITED ACCESS TO THE REFUGEES IN SOME AREAS. MOREOVER, WE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT FREQUENT TELEPHONE CONTACT BETWEEN MEMBERS OF OUR REFUGEE OFFICE AND IATF, ORM AND EA HAD CLARIFIED OUR USE OF NUMBERS. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY NOT THE CASE AND IT NOW APPEARS THAT TELEPHONE CALLS MAY ACTUALLY HAVE COMPOUNDED THE PROBLEM SINCE EVERYONE WORKING ON THE PROGRAM WAS NOT AWARE OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE VARIOUS DISCUSSIONS.

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2. FOLLOWING RECEIPT YOUR MESSAGE, ED MASTERS REVIEWED THE REFUGEE

SITUATION IN DETAIL WITH OUR STAFF. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING COVERS THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED IN YOUR MESSAGE:

A. REGARDING PARA 4 REFTEL, IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE OF WIDER DISTRIBUTION WE ARE CLARIFYING THE SITUATION REGARDING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. BRIEFLY, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT BUT HAVE PERHAPS NOT FULLY IDENTIFIED VARIOUS CATEGORIES IN OUR WRITTEN REPORTS. BANGKOK 20383 REPORTED THAT VAYAMA CAMP VIETNAMESE POPULATION WAS 5,052 (312 WHO ARRIVED BEFORE JULY 1 AND 740 WHO ARRIVED AFTER). THIS MESSAGE LISTED 200 VIETNAMESE IN BANGKOK AREA WHO MIGHT QUALIFY ONCE THEY WERE INTERVIEWED, FOR A TOTAL OF 1,252. IN ADDITION, INS ISSUED PAROLE NUMBERS TO 216 THAI DAM IN UDORN WHO ARE CHARGED TO VIETNAMESE QUOTA, RAISING THE TOTAL FIGURE TO 1,468. INS AUTHORIZED AND ISSUED 792 PAROLE NUMBERS TO THESE VIETNAMESE (INCLUDING THE THAI DAM) LEAVING 676 WITHOUT PAROLE NUMBERS. BANGKOK 22360 LISTED 683 VIETNAMESE STILL AT VAYAMA WITHOUT PAROLE NUMBERS OF WHOM A NUMBER ENTERED THAILAND AFTER JULY 1 AND ARE NOT ELIGIBLE UNDER CURRENT CRITERIA. THIS IS VERY CLOSE TO THE FIGURE OF 676 MENTIONED ABOVE.

B. REGARDING PARAGRAPH 6 REFTEL, BANGKOK 22005 DOES NOT RPT NOT EXCLUDE MEO. IN OUR RECENT REPORTING WE HAVE BEEN LUMPING MEO AND OTHER LAO TOGETHER. THIS WAS EXPLAINED TO WASHINGTON BY TELEPHONE, BUT OBVIOUSLY THE WORD DID NOT GET TO EVERYONE CONCERNED.

C. BANGKOK 22005 REPORTED 2,232 LAO REFUGEES IN CATEGORY III. THIS IS NO GREAT CHANGE FROM EARLIER REPORTING. BANGKOK 20786 REPORTED 2,200 IN CATEGORY III WITH NOTE THAT WE WERE NOT RPT NOT CONSIDERING THIS GROUP FOR PAROLE UNDER CURRENT DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTIONS. WE HAVE NONETHELESS REPORTED EXISTENCE OF THIS CATEGORY OF REFUGEES BECAUSE WE WISHED TO PROVIDE, AND BELIEVED THE DEPARTMENT WANTED, COMPLETE PICTURE OF LAO REFUGEES REMAINING IN THAILAND. HOPEFULLY BANGKOK 22480, WHICH PROBABLY CROSSED REFTEL, CLARIFIES THIS SITUATION.

3. WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO CLARIFY UNCERTAINTIES REGARDING THE VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF REFUGEES AND TO INSURE CONSISTENT REPORTING. PLEASE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH NEARLY 70,000 REFUGEES SCATTERED IN THIRTEEN CAMPS PLUS A
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NUMBER LIVING ILLEGALLY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND IN BANGKOK. NEVERTHELESS PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT WE ARE TRYING TO KEEP ON TOP OF THIS PROBLEM AND TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO BE AS CLEAR AS POSSIBLE IN DESCRIBING THE CHANGING NUMBERS WITH WHICH WE AND YOU ARE TRYING TO DEAL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO22605
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750373-0606
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751015/aaaaankq.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 75 STATE 254266
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <24 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REFUGEE REPORTING PROBLEMS
TAGS: SREF, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006